

Survival Guide for International Students



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1. Before Arrival

Have you been accepted to the Cinematography Department? Congratulations! Now you have to arrange the necessary documents for permanent residency in the Czech Republic. It is also good to arrange your accommodation and health insurance which is mandatory in the Czech Republic. And your pets should stay at home; no animals are allowed in the school building.

Bear in mind that if you are accepted it does not mean you get the student status. You only become a student when you enrol in Prague. The Orientation Month is held in September and attendance is mandatory.

Before you become a student, we recommend you study the Pre-departure information package "Next Stop The Czech Republic" which consists of a brochure and a film. <http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/next-stop-the-czech-republic.aspx>

The conditions for long stay vary based on whether you are an EU citizen or from another country. Citizens of EU and Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland have the right to stay in CR without a visa; there are different conditions for third country nationals.

Non-EU citizens: You need to get the necessary visa/permanent residency permit for your studies at the Czech Republic embassy or consulate in your country of origin well in advance. The administration process can take up to two months. The Department will provide the supporting materials required by ČR from the school for a visa/long stay (a stay of over 90 days) permit. Apply for long stay as the study program takes two years. The price of the visa depends on the student's country of origin.

Czech Republic's embassies abroad:

http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/diplomatic_missions/czech_missions_abroad/index.html

Information on permanent residency in ČR, Ministry of Interior :

<http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/immigration.aspx>

Long stay/visa:

http://www.mzv.cz/jnp/en/information_for aliens/long_stay_visa/study_long_term.html

Quick and easy presentation for students from a country outside the European Union regarding long-term visa and long-term residence:

<http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/file/quicknsimple-presentation-en.aspx>

1.1 Health Insurance

For students from the EU, Norway, Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Iceland it is important to have the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). To obtain treatment under the provisions of the European regulation, it is important to contact a medical facility which is covered by the contract with the public health insurance system; most of them do.

Common healthcare is covered by the insurance; however, there are additional charges for some treatments and materials within dental care. If you need to see a specialist, your GP should give you a recommendation. In emergency cases you can go directly to the hospital or you can call an ambulance (155), it arrives within a few minutes.

Some GPs speak English and can accept you in their practice; you can also find a foreign clinic although those tend to have higher additional charges and may not have any contracts with health insurance companies. In such cases, you have to pay cash right there.

If you are non-EU citizens, you have to arrange a health insurance which is mandatory in the Czech Republic. It is best to do that prior to your arrival. More information about health insurance:

<http://infocizinci.cz/en/uncategorized-en/healthcare-insurance-for-students/>.

2. After Arrival

Welcome to the Czech Republic! If you wish to avoid raised brows from the beginning, do not say "Czechia" because Czechs do not like that name much. We are said to be rather reserved – although that changes when you sit with us over our national treasure, beer ☺.

Our Ministry of Interior has prepared a short video about Czechs. It is not Oscar winner but still, it provides the essential information.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNqVG7FWn18>.

After your arrival, you have to register with the relevant authorities. All non-EU students are legally obliged to register with the Foreign Police within 3 days of arrival, if it has not been done by the accommodation provider (e.g. hostel, hotel etc.)

All EU students are obliged to register with the appropriate Foreign Police Department within 30 days of arrival in case the length of their intended stay in the

Czech Republic exceeds 30 days. However, it is not necessary if it has been done by the accommodation provider.

Students who have been issued a residence card are obliged to return the card before ending their stay in the ČR.

Foreign Police Department in Prague:

<http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/contacts-alien-police-alien-police.aspx>

2.1 Orientation Month

The Orientation month is held in September. The semester opens with the matriculation after which you officially become a FAMU student. In a matriculation ceremony, students entered in the student register of a faculty (matricula) pledge to fulfil the requirements of academic study, to honour their moral obligation toward the University, and to respect its internal regulations and the decisions of academic officials. The ceremony requires a formal attire.

During the Orientation month, you will learn about the KOS student system where you find the subjects you take (there is no hard-copy student book at FAMU, everything is done electronically). You will learn the details of your study system, teaching, information about the FAMU library, studio, classrooms, student ID and other elements. You will also learn some basics of Czech language. Attendance is mandatory. And we also prepared few cultural events for you!

Cost of living: A single student is advised to have available approximately 300 euros per month, which should cover accommodation, transport, food and entertainment.

3. Transport in Prague

The Prague public transport consists of three underground lines: A, B, C, trams, buses, trains, ferries and a funicular. Transport is reliable and cheap in comparison to other capital cities. The transport system covers the majority of the city and outskirts. The underground (metro) operates daily from 5:00 till 24:00. During the morning and afternoon peaks, the intervals amount to 2–3 minutes; in the evenings, they are never longer than 10 minutes. All lines have the same interval of 7.5 minutes at weekends. Trams have day and night routes, just like buses.

Tickets: Non-transfer tickets priced at 24 CZK can be used for 30 minutes from validation.

Transfer tickets priced at 32 CZK can be used for 90 minutes from validation. Ticket machines are installed in all metro stations and at some stops on the surface. The machines only accept coins (no banknotes). Places with busy tourist traffic (airport, main station) also have machines accepting bank cards. Prague public transport tickets can also be purchased at the Public Transport information centres, most newsagents and some stores in the city. Bus drivers sell tickets albeit with an additional charge.

In metro, tram and bus vehicles, there are at least 6 seats reserved and marked for persons with limited abilities for movement and orientation. Should the need arise, passengers are obliged to free up additional seats at the request of the driver or authorised individual. This concerns the disabled, elderly but also pregnant women: people occupying seats are expected to let such persons have the seat with no need to be asked.

Buses operating in the outskirts of Prague have people queue up at the stop and enter the bus through the front door where the driver checks their tickets.

Timetables, mobile applications: A current source of information on Prague public transport is available at: dpp.cz or idos.cz, (English and German version). This website finds any route you might need, and it is reliable – it includes the current detours.

You could also download the official application to your mobile phone:

<http://www.dpp.cz/en/mobile-apps/>.

3.1 From the Airport to Your Room

Have you arrived to the airport or a station? Before you purchase the public transport card called *Lítačka*, which will grant you unlimited travelling all over the city, get a three-day pass (EUR 12) and stamp it. Do not wave the paper card around the machine, waiting for it to be scanned: you have to insert the card in the [machine](#) which will stamp it. Do not stamp the pass any more than that, just carry it everywhere. Inspectors impose fines of CZK 800 (approx. EUR 30). An inspector is someone who can talk to you anywhere within the ticket area and request a valid ticket to be produced. He will show a Public Transport Company badge.

tickets: <http://www.dpp.cz/en/fares-in-prague/>

fines: <http://www.dpp.cz/en/the-amount-of-supplementary-charge/>

You can get a cheap and fast ride to the centre from the airport on bus 100 or 119 and then change to the metro. The bus stops are located near Terminal 1 and Terminal 2 – in front of the Arrival hall.

119: Prague Airport – Nádraží Vevešlavín (metro line A) – **15 minutes**

100: Prague Airport – Zličín (metro line B) – **18 minutes**

Map: http://www.dpp.cz/download-file/13574-airport_schem.pdf

When you get off at the destination stop (remember to press the button in the vehicle to open the door but please do not press the red button, that is in case of emergency only!), you might be surprised by the quantity of people with dogs. This is no hunters' gathering – Czechs love their dogs and consider them members of the family. We do not talk much to other people on public transport but this should be compensated by the fact that our public transport is amongst Europe's best systems. Besides classic taxis, there is also Uber in Prague if you want to have a guaranteed seat. If you like exercise, you can try the increasingly popular bike renting system called [Rekola](#).

Attention! From May 2017, [smoking is prohibited](#) in all bars, restaurants or cafés including clubs; alcohol is also prohibited at all public transport stops, near schools and in selected parks and streets.

Map showing sites where alcohol ban applies:

http://www.praha.eu/jnp/cz/o_meste/zivot_v_praze/bezpecnost/mapa_kde_je_v_praze_zakazano_pit_alkohol.html

3.2 Getting the Public Transport Card aka Lítačka

You can order your Lítačka online (and wait till it arrives via mail) or buy it at the Škoda palace (have your ID ready and 200 CZK) in Jungmannova Street not far from FAMU. The pricelist is available at: <https://www.litacka.cz/price-list>. Then you have to buy a coupon for your card, either at one of the [branches](#) or online. If you have an ISIC and are not over 26, a five-month student coupon will cost you CZK 1,200 (EUR 46).

Fun fact: Did you know that "Lítat" means "to fly", but Lítačka also means "diarrhoea" :).

ISIC card: <https://famu-prague.com/for-students#isic>

4. Accommodation in Prague

FAMU has its own [student's dormitory](#), situated in the centre of Prague. However, FAMU cannot guarantee the international students to get place in this dormitory. If you want to live there please contact Adéla Kalná (adela.kalna@famucz) as soon as possible. There are more dormitories of other universities in Prague. For example [dormitories of Charles University](#). In any case, it is necessary to order this form of accommodation well in advance. Most of our students find their accommodation through various websites, rental agencies or Facebook groups such as:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Flatshares/>

<http://www.happyhouserentals.com/en/search/rent/apartment/>

<http://www.homesweethome.cz/en/rentals/flat>

<http://www.foreigners.cz/real-estate>

<http://www.forstudents.cz/Locations/Prague/Apartments-flats-for-rent-Prague.aspx>

<http://www.expats.cz/praguerealestate/?Nav>

<http://www.studentflats.cz/>

<https://www.sreality.cz/en/search/apartments>

www.bezrealitky.cz

The price for a room within a shared apartment start with approx. CZK 5,000 per month depending on the location and amenities (gas, electricity). Contracts are usually signed for a year. Dormitories are cheaper.

5. Driving License

Every person driving a motor vehicle in the Czech Republic has to carry either a Czech driver's license or any international driver's license accepted in the Czech Republic. Driver's licenses issued by individual states in the U.S., are not accepted in the Czech Republic.

Essential information: We drive on the right in the Czech Republic. Use of a seatbelt is required. Children under 12 may not ride in the seat next to the driver. All motor vehicles must keep their road headlights on at night and day, all year round. If you are involved in a traffic accident, you must wait until the police arrive. Call 112 or 158 to report the accident and any injuries.

More info: <http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/information-for-drivers.aspx>

Is your license valid here?

<http://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/article/third-country-nationals-is-my-license-valid-in-the-cr-may-i-do-i-have-to-replace-it-with-a-czech-driving-license.aspx>

6. Important Telephone Numbers

Important telephone numbers (free of charge):

International Dial Code of the Czech Republic 00420 or +420

Ambulance 155

Police 158

Fire Brigade 150

Metropolitan Police 156

Emergency Calls 112 (guarantees English - speaking operators)

Other phone numbers (paid)

Emergency road service: 1230, 1240

Any information you require about foreign and Czech telephone numbers : 1188

FAMU Contacts

<https://www.amu.cz/en/all-about-amu/university-organizational-structure/>

Cinematography Department:

<https://famu-prague.com/contacts/>

7. Currency

The currency is the Czech crown (Koruna česká – Kč/CZK). The following denominations are in circulation: Notes: 100; 200; 500; 1,000; 2000 and 5,000 Kč. Coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 Kč.

Most stores and venues offer the option of card payment (often NFC). When you exchange money, be observant of hidden charges, and always study the terms and conditions carefully. A tried and tested money exchange in Prague is e.g. this one: <https://www.exchange.cz/>, which is located near FAMU.

For the sake of a longer stay in the Czech Republic, it is practical to arrange a bank account – this is mandatory for students. If the school compensates some study-related expenses it is always by means of a bank transfer in ČR. In nearly every bank in Prague, all it takes for foreigners to open an account is a passport

and one other form of identification (such as a driver's license). Your best option is choosing a bank with no charges for account maintenance and ATM withdrawals. Such accounts are offered by e.g. [Raiffeisen Bank](#) or [EquaBank](#).

More information:

<https://transferwise.com/us/blog/opening-a-bank-account-in-czech-republic>

8. Food

Restaurant Prices

Meals: CZK 80–250, Beer (1/2 litre): CZK 25– 50, Wine (3/4 litre): CZK 150– 500

You can get cheap food at the student dining halls (menza); the closest to FAMU is Menza Arnošta z Pardubic in Voršilská Street or the Menza Právnická at the Nám. Curieových but there are usually queues there because there are a lot of law students :-). Just bring your ISIC and charge it at the dining hall; this will establish your right to subsidised food prices.

The faculty building itself has a FAMU [Student Club](#) which prepares relatively cheap food and has cheap beer on tap. A few streets away, at Veleslavínova 5, there is [Hany Bany](#) where you can try the Czech speciality – fried cheese with French fries and tartare sauce and meet some students from the nearby Faculty of Arts enjoying a lively discussion. Students also like the [Café Kampus](#) in Náprstkova 10 where you even can borrow and play some board games.

If you wish to enjoy food in a stylish setting, there is the Slavia café and Parnas restaurant in the school building; however, the prices are not too friendly to local students although the view is stunning.

Tips for pubs with good beer and outside seating or various bars in Prague are available in this guide:

<http://www.prague.eu/file/edee/universal/download/brozury/the-beer-guide-to-prague.pdf>

If you prefer coffee or dessert, check this guide:

<http://www.prague.eu/file/edee/universal/download/brozury/prazske-kavarny/prague-cafes.pdf>

Tipping

In Czech venues, the tips are not included in the price. Customers usually tip with 10 to 15 % of the total, if they were happy with the service naturally. Besides that,

you are also expected to tip your hairdresser, beautician or taxi driver; never try to tip officials or doctors as this is considered unethical. You should not leave change on the table; just name the total amount you intend to pay, including the tip, when you are given the bill.

9. Religion

The Czech Republic is a rather atheist country. In the 2011 census, just under 21 % population declared faith, which means roughly 2,170,000 believers. The most popular is the Roman Catholic Church with over one million believers, followed by the Evangelical Czech Brethren (52,000) and Czechoslovak Hussite Church (39,000). It is also interesting that over 4.5 million people decided not to answer the question about faith. Besides a thousand Christian churches, there are dozens of synagogues, two mosques (in Prague and in Brno). There are no Buddhist or Hinduist temples here. The FAMU building has no prayer room or chapel. Prague has e.g. regular Christian services in English or German, and there are meetings of other Church members.

Services in foreign languages:

<http://www.praguezones.com/en/prague/masses-and-services-in-foreign-languages/>

10. National Holidays

There are 13 state holidays when banks and state institutions etc. are closed and public transport extends its intervals. Big department stores close during some of the holidays.

January 1st (New Year's Day), April 14th (Good Friday), April 17th (Easter Monday), May 1st (Labour Day), May 8th (Liberation Day), July 5th (St Cyril and St Methodius Day), July 6th (Jan Hus Day), September 28th (Czech Statehood Day), October 28th (Establishment of the Czechoslovak Republic), November 17th (Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day), December 24 – 26th (Christmas).

11. Postage, Mobile Operators and Internet

Postage: International postage for a letter is CZK 32. Get your stamps at the newsagent's or at a post office. Just drop your letter in any post box on the street –

they are orange. [Česká pošta](#) also offers various services to facilitate access to the authorities. Also you can buy “kolky” there. You will need them for your long-term residency ID.

Mobile Operators: There are three big operators in the Czech Republic: O2, T-Mobile and Vodafone, who have dozens of branches in Prague, as well as several smaller, virtual operators (e.g. Kaktus, Tesco, Sazka). Your best option will be arranging a tariff with unlimited calls and text messages where the prices start at approximately CZK 700 per month. Another option is getting a prepaid card; however, this is not as good price-wise. You can sometimes see telephone booths in the streets – although they are not as pretty as the British ones, you can place free calls to emergency numbers and paid calls to any other numbers from them.

Internet: A fast and stable Internet connection including Wi-Fi router costs roughly CZK 500 per month with download 100Mb/s. You can get it e.g. from [UPC](#), which also offers various packages with TV programs, including foreign ones, or landlines.

Please read all contracts carefully before you sign. Sometimes a less than ideal service might be forced upon you at the branch. Study the pricelists online in peace at home.

12. Entertainment and Free Time

ISIC holders enjoy discounts on tickets to most cinemas, theatres, galleries or sports facilities. This also applies to music (e.g. [Masters of Rock](#)) or film festivals (e.g. [Karlovy Vary International Film Festival](#)).

In the cinema, make sure you do not go to see a dubbed version – films for children and young people are often dubbed in the Czech Republic although there are also the original versions, most often on at [Cinemacity – Slovanský dům](#). Smaller film theatres like [Světazor](#), [Aero](#), [Okó](#) or [Atlas](#) combine mainstream and arthouse production. They also offer various lectures, retrospectives or smaller film festivals. [Kino Ponrepo](#), operated by the National Film Archive, offers particularly older films from many cinematographies of the world.

You can find Musical map of Prague here:

http://www.prague.eu/file/edee/universal/maps/mapa_hudebni_en_final_print.indd.pdf

Five Prague Walks:

<http://www.prague.eu/file/edee/universal/download/brozury/pet-prazskych-prochazek/en.pdf>

Galleries, Museums, Theatres, Parks, Shops etc.

<http://www.prague.eu/file/edee/universal/maps/praha-do-kapsy-en.pdf>

Sports and Fitness:

<https://www.expats.cz/prague/directory/sports-and-fitness/>

Other brochures in many languages can be found here:

<http://www.prague.eu/en/download>

13. Cultural Habits and Customs: A Few Tips

This brief introduction can hardly sum up all of the Czech cultural practices; let's just look at some to prevent a cultural shock. If you are European, you will probably find no surprise. At home, most people take their shoes off and put slippers on; this also applies to visitors who are offered slippers. With respect to the fact that there is rain, mud, snow and sometimes "presents" from dogs, this is necessary. Most Czech toilets have no bidet so toilet paper alone is used. If you are invited to someone's home, you are expected to bring a present – e.g. wine or chocolates. Do not unwrap them, give them to the organiser of the event.

If someone is introduced to you, that is the place for a handshake or light kiss on both cheeks, if for instance a friend introduces his girlfriend to you. Men never kiss other men. If the meeting is formal – e.g. an employment interview, it means no kissing at all. We do not usually shake hands with doctors or officials – in this case, it is up to whether a handshake is offered. In general, if a person is older than you, you wait for a sign from him/her. Use the formal ("vy") form of verb when talking to strangers (e.g. in the street), teachers and everyone you do not know e.g. in a class. Address your teacher with the highest degree achieved: "Professor, could you...". If someone thanks you, you are expected to say "Prosím" (Welcome) or "Není zač" (Not at all).

Check the basic Czech phrases:

<https://www.expats.cz/prague/article/czech-language/basic-czech/>

Let women get in and out of elevators first. Greet other people when you get in and out of the elevator cabin. Czechs also exchange greetings with all residents in their apartment building. We also say greetings when we enter a small shop, and say hello to the cashier. There is no greeting when going to the anonymous space of a supermarket and such like. On public transport, calls should be restricted to the minimum but you will experience listening to lengthy stories of others many times for sure. If we cough or sneeze, we turn away from other people

and cover our mouth. Blowing one's nose in front of others is quite common but, if you are sick, people will regard you with hostility.

Opera and big theatres expect a formal suit from gentlemen and an evening dress from ladies although theatres are used to jeans-clad tourists. Do not use your mobile phone as a torch and do not talk in a cinema although this is unnecessary to tell you, film lovers! :) More about Czech etiquette here:

<https://www.expats.cz/prague/article/the-czech-republic/czech-etiquette-survival-guie/>

THE END

P.S. Is there anything missing? Let us know at adela.kalna@famucz

Thank you and have a great time in our country! :-).